

building COMMUNITY

For Indiana's Third Century

January/February 2003

**building
COMMUNITY**, a bimonthly publication of Indiana 2016, solicits articles from around Indiana that illustrate community-based efforts. Please electronically submit articles to jswenson@gov.state.in.us. Digital photographs are accepted and encouraged.

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Indiana 2016
4750 N. Meridian
Indianapolis, IN 46016
Tel: 317.283.8175
Fax: 317.283.1201
indiana2016@gov.state.in.us
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Grandparenting

by Aja May

When Alice Oliver, a grandparent raising her grandchildren, noticed the increase of grandparents in similar situations at the community center where she works, she and other center employees set out to see how they could better serve this population. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Multi-Service Center and Oliver decided to create programming that would help grandparents adjust to their second round of parenting.

The new program, named Second Time Around, started as a support group that would allow grandparents to get together with one another and exchange frustrations, successes, feelings and challenges while grandchildren attended a similar support group.

What started out as a support group meeting once a month has since turned into a program that meets almost once a week. When grandparents voiced concerns about wading through the legal system with adoption issues and absentee parents, the Multi-Service Center brought in an attorney, Fay Williams, who offered her support and advice pro bono.

A partnership with Second Helpings in Indianapolis allows grandparents and grandchildren to take part in a monthly meal with their friends in the program. Computer classes are now offered to educate grandparents on the technology that their grandchildren use for schoolwork, research and fun.

For the grandchildren, the Second Time Around program offers a peer group of youth going through many of the same experiences. For kids that are often dealing with abandonment, parental drug use, stress and the hurt of broken promises, the support group at the Multi-Service Center and the counseling that accompanies it can be invaluable.

Oliver, now the program's coordinator, explains of Second Time Around, "We don't have all the answers, but we do have some of the answers they need." Through Oliver and the Multi-Service Center's innovation, compassion and dedication, grandparents are becoming equipped for parenting...again.



Grandmother Clarissa Wright participates in the Second Time Around Program with Clarissa C. (8 years) Gianna Grace Elizabeth (4 years), Nikayla Nicole, (3 years) and Ayannah D. (3 months).

Gatherings

by Judy O'Bannon

**Indiana
2016 is less
about
planning
celebrations,
and more
about
planning a
future worth
celebrating.**

So much to do, so little time!

As the new year dawns, the countdown to our bicentennial grows closer!

With 13 years until the Hoosier bicentennial, I'm occasionally asked, isn't it a little *early* to begin planning the festivities now?

The fact is, though, that the Indiana 2016 initiative is less about planning *celebrations* and more about planning for a *future worth celebrating*. Rather than looking at the bicentennial as simply a time for beard-growing contests and fireworks, Indiana 2016 hopes Hoosiers will consider four questions, both for themselves and their communities.

What is our past?

Who are we today?

What do we want to be in the future – specifically in 2016?

How do we make that vision a reality?

This place we call Indiana is really a collection of communities. Each and every community has its own set of answers to the four questions. How we answer those questions will determine what kind of an Indiana we'll have to celebrate at our bicentennial in the year 2016.

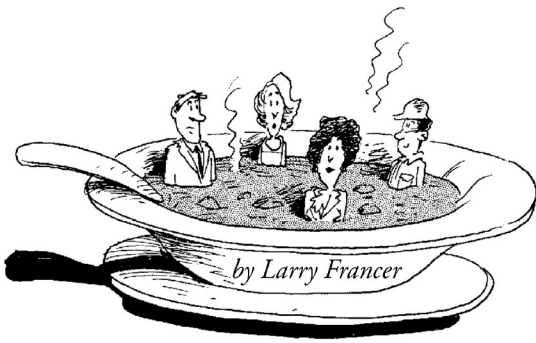
That's why this issue is devoted to new beginnings. Not to say that we aren't doing things worth celebrating now. As you will see, we are! Often, though, as we near a specific moment in time, like a bicentennial, we are motivated to want to do more as a way of "leaving something behind" for future generations. And, the truth is that already, all across Indiana, Hoosiers are not just leaving something behind, but truly building "community" in ways that bring people together and make us all want to get involved in whatever way we can.

In this issue of Building Community, you will find stories written by and about some truly innovative individuals and initiatives that approach issues, challenges and programs with new eyes and from new perspectives. Our hope is that these Hoosiers will offer to you more than just a fresh look at an old problem, but rather some energizing inspiration for what we all can do to make sure that in 2016 we are celebrating because we are right where we want to be!



Celebrate Volunteerism!

Joseph Smith, Sr., Executive Director of the Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism, and First Lady Judy O'Bannon (pictured above) helped to recognize winners of the Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteerism for 2002 at Celebrate Volunteerism held January 15, 2003 in the Statehouse. Recipients included the employees of **Eli Lilly and Company**, headquartered in **Indianapolis**, who contributed more than 11,000 volunteer hours of service; **Purdue University's EPICS (Lafayette)** program of Engineering Projects in Community Service; **Lutheran Child and Family Services of Indiana/Kentucky, Inc. (Indianapolis)**, which has encouraged volunteers from their programs to work with the community and volunteers from the community to work with their programs; **Henry County United Fund**, with its strong emphasis on youth boards and commissions; and the **Volunteer Action Center of Bartholomew County**, connecting more than 1,000 volunteers with organizations who need their services.



Creativity: the secret ingredient!

Farmland is an Indiana 2016 community in East Central Indiana with 1,456 residents and 122 members of Historic Farmland USA (HFUSA), our Main Street/Preservation group. And we always try to have a good time! Now I know that sounds a little simplistic, but it's true. Life is too short to be doing things, even serious things like preservation and community building, without a little fun. If it's fun, more people will want to be involved. Heck, they'll be afraid not to be involved because they might miss something. And it all starts out with the common goal of making our community a better place to live in as well as to visit – and with a little creativity

So what do you do when your town is so badly torn up that it's difficult for cars to get there and for people to walk around? You come up with "Torn-Up Tuesdays!" We found ourselves in that position in 1998 when our ISTE (now called TEA 21) project was in full swing. A streetscaping – slate pattern sidewalks, railroad style street lamps, trash cans and walnut trough-like planters – was underway, and INDOT was coordinating a full restoration of the highway section that runs through downtown, so we had to try something to bring people into town.

A group of six HFUSA members got together to record the Historic Farmland jingle for radio spots, and we also placed ads in the Muncie newspaper and posters in the surrounding areas. Every Tuesday participating businesses (90% of the downtown establishments) showed their support by having in-store specials and wearing yellow t-shirts, hard hats and "Torn-Up Tuesday" buttons.

All businesses survived the ISTE project, and *many actually reported increased traffic* from the prior year due in no small part to the "Torn-Up Tuesdays" campaign. The Historic Farmland singers went on to sing the jingle at multiple events: the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new streetscaping (with First Lady Judy O'Bannon in attendance), a "**Muncie** on the Move" chamber breakfast to advertise "Farmland's Own Holiday Evening," the 1998 Indiana Main Street Conference in **Warsaw**, and most recently at the first performance of the "Work in Progress Players" at the Farmland Community and Cultural Center (FCCC).

Well, what do you do when you want to get people involved with your cause and your organization doesn't have staff or a huge endowment or even an office? You start small and build support by making sure everyone can have some fun. HFUSA never really had a vision of where we wanted to be in ten years when we organized in 1992, but we did have people WITH vision. And through that vision we took one step at a time and built on our small accomplishments to get where we are today. And always have a good time!

Larry Francer is president of Historic Farmland, USA.



Next time your community faces what seems to be an obstacle, you might consider the creative approach Farmland took when they turned disruptive downtown construction into an asset.



A group of six HFUSA members got together to record the Historic Farmland jingle for radio spots.

Historic Farmland Jingle

*Historic Farmland, it's the place to be
Historic Farmland, There's so much to see
Twenty minutes east of Muncie, it's so easy to find
Friendly hometown atmosphere, truly one-of-a-kind
Potters, artists, weavers,
Farmers and Sunday believers
Confectioners, photographers and many herbal relievers
Historic Farmland, it's the place to be!*

by Barbara Butts

Need knows no season

by Shea Fletcher
DePauw University



For many of us, the festive season is a time to balance good cheer with good will by sparing a thought for others. Regardless of background, organization, or church affiliation, Hoosiers from all over the state joined to help their neighbors in need this past holiday season.

The Family Christian Development Center in **Nappanee** joined volunteers, Toys for Tots, and the local Boys and Girls club in an annual Christmas Jubilee, which gave parents in need the opportunity to choose and wrap a toy for their child. *Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers* and state employees were able to gather 26,000 items of food for local food pantries and shelters, more than doubling the previous year's donations!

Community participation was also present in Project Angel, which coupled **Avon** schools with organizations all over **Hendricks County** in order to help those in need. With the help of the Hendricks County Sheriffs Department, various local service organizations, the Avon Rotary, and Mears Machine, Avon schools participating in Project Angel were able to collect over 120,000 items the past three years for donation – 50,000 items were collected this past December! Blaine Van Der Snick from Avon High School says, "These particular students represent the future leaders of our communities, so providing an opportunity for service to others will hopefully sensitize them to the need for community action to meet the challenges that communities face."

The holidays are clearly the season of goodwill, but charities need donations and support for their work throughout the year in order to meet the needs of the communities and individuals that rely on their services. The efforts of communities this past holiday season should be an inspiration. Think of all that could be accomplished if the same compassion and concern were applied to the rest of the year. Shelters, food banks and the individuals who depend upon them rely on our good will in order to operate. And while the holiday spirit may prompt our generosity, the community is in need of a helping hand year round – not just in the last quarter.

Dawn of a new day at Dayspring

by Pat Wachtel,
Dayspring Board Chair

The caring and concern of the **Central Indiana** community helped Dayspring Center to reopen its doors to serve homeless families on December 9, 2002 after closing in late September because donations were not keeping pace with expenses.

Having served families in Indianapolis since 1989, Dayspring Center was determined to reopen the fourteen crisis shelter rooms before really cold weather set in. The Board and remaining Staff spent October and November preparing for new residents. The budget, staffing levels, and programs were all restructured to better align with funding realities, and a long time service offering lunch to hungry neighbors was indefinitely suspended.

The community's generous response really made a difference. Assistance came from state employees, Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), the Indiana Department of Commerce, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Jim Irsay and the Indianapolis Colts, the Indianapolis Foundation and several participating funds of Central Indiana Community Foundation, and the thirteen Episcopal churches who originally founded the Shelter. In addition, hundreds of volunteers worked tirelessly to clean, paint and polish the shelter so that it would be ready to serve homeless families again. Thanks to Hoosiers willing to help their homeless neighbors, families in need are still finding peace and hope at Dayspring.



Building community, one life at a time

by Wayne Zink, M.C.
CEO, Full Circle Enterprise

It's almost becoming a cliché to say, "I am so busy these days." Or, "I don't have time to get to that." It is true; the pace of life has become overwhelming for many of us, and the demands made on our time can be daunting.

Yet, for this very reason, it is more vital than ever to create some balance in our lives. Work and play – build your home and participate in building up the community you live in. Create a life for yourself that looks and feels like a life you want to lead.

Easily said, but can it be so easy to actually achieve this "balance?" Here are three steps that may help you decide to reshape your life and community.

Step one: take a good long look in the mirror. Ask yourself, what do I want for myself, and how does this help those around me, those I love? Who am I? And how does this relate to what I want to become? It seems so simple, yet how many days speed by without a thought about what drives you internally? By the way, this internal process does not have to be earth shattering. Your revelations don't have to be so terribly profound. They simply have to be YOUR truth. Simple, clear truth about what you think about you. Instead of working really hard at this, approach this process as a child would. Unfettered by unrealistic ideas and expectations, reacquainting yourself with you.

Step two: accept what you learn from what you see in the mirror. Or accept as much of it as you can. Knowing a little bit about who you are goes a long way in providing you with some meaningful life direction. It really is that simple. All of us have sustained some "damage" in our lives. Some of us have sustained a great deal of damage. Yet, each time something painful occurs, something more than damage takes place. Resilience! We are hurt, and at the same time we learn how strong we are and how to solve problems. For step two to work, focus on what you learned that has made you who you really are.

Step three: now you are ready to take a look out your window. What do you see? What do you want to see, and what can you do today to make this happen? Let's talk about balance again. You should be realistic when you decide how you want to help build your community, and at the same time, work from inspiration. What is your DREAM for your community? That dream needs to directly support who you are—what is in your heart (see step 1 and 2). This is where you find the energy to accomplish something for your community—from your heart. Perhaps you need a playground that is accessible for children with disabilities, or a vacant lot can become a beautiful park, vegetable or flower garden. Should the side of a building become a mural painted by your community? What about saving that historic building? Where could your community gather together?

The needs are endless—community building is truly a "journey, not a destination." And, all the needs are good. The question for each of us is will we take the first step to finding out what our dream is, and then making that happen?



Farmer's markets, like this one in Jeffersonville, build community by promoting healthy food choices, benefiting the local economy, and bringing people together.

Build your community with a little help from Indiana 2016

"Communities Building Community," is the theme of Indiana 2016. Our mission is to educate about, inspire and recognize the active involvement of Hoosiers in their communities. Why not consider signing up your community-based project as an Indiana 2016 "community?" Contact Katy Brett at kbrett@gov.state.in.us or 317-283-8171. You'll be a part of a growing network of community builders around Indiana.



Welcome to **Russellville**.

Population: approximately 500.

What does a town with a population of 500 do with a vacant elementary school? In the spring of 1992-93, Russellville Elementary School closed its doors. Vacant until 1999, the North Putnam Community School Corporation then made the decision to give the building to the town of Russellville, and the

people of the community were given the charge to find an answer to this question. Looking at a building stripped of all facilities—including blackboards, bulletin boards, kitchen sinks, chairs, and tables—the people of Russellville envisioned a community center, and the Putnam County Community Foundation agreed.

With a grant for youth from the **Putnam County Community Foundation**, the people of Russellville were able to purchase equipment that would redress the interior of the school and attract people to use the facility. The Putnam County Foundation also stepped in when the leaky roof threatened to prevent use of the building with a grant to provide the much needed repairs.

Also, the Department of Commerce has recently awarded the Russellville Community Center a \$373,800 grant that will air-condition the entire building, redo the kitchen (replace those missing sinks!), and repair the parking lot as well as allowing for a make-over of the stage, dressing rooms, and gym.

It truly is a new beginning for the former Russellville Elementary School! The new Russellville Community Center now houses Head Start and hosts a variety of community activities including open gym, line and square dancing, movie night, euchre night, sleep-overs, dinner theaters, roller skating, auctions, craft and bake sales, New Year's Eve Parties, super bowl parties, and alumni banquets. The facility is also available to rent for wedding receptions, reunions, parties, etc. The committee reports that the building is booked nearly every day,

and the income received helps pay the bills. As Darrell Wiatt has stated, "The school was the center of the community, [now] the same building (The Russellville Community Center) has become the center of our community once again."

The people of Russellville have created this new beginning for their community. They envisioned a community center and through hard work and determination, they have seen their vision become a reality. Through their vision, their community will grow stronger with more opportunities to interact and understand each other. And, the future looks bright for the Russellville Community Center! Through the estab-

lishment of an endowment (with contributions from Malcolm Romine, Zoe Wiatt, Bill Lawter, and Darrell Wiatt), future generations will be able to utilize the building for years to come!

New beginnings for communities can happen—no matter how difficult the obstacles may appear. New beginnings require a vision and people who are willing to take the action needed to turn that vision into a reality. When people come together, individuals and foundations, amazing things can happen—they build community!

If you or your community would like to find out more information about your local community foundation, please visit www.ingrantmakers.org. Or, if you are in need of information on community grants offered by the Indiana State Department of Commerce, please visit www.state.in.us/doc.

by Katy Brett

New beginnings require a vision and people who are willing to take the action to turn that vision into a reality.



Darrell Wiatt
contributed to this story.

building
COMMUNITY
editor-in-chief
JUDYO BANNON
managing editor
JENNIFER SWENSON
contributing editors
KATY BRETT
JONATHAN SWAIN
AJAMAY